

SLINDON VILLAGE HISTORY TRAIL, WEST SUSSEX, SOUTH DOWNS



Easy Terrain

1.5 miles
Circular
30 to 45 mins

221214



Access Notes



1. The walk has a few steady slopes and follows the village pavements and roads.
2. Some sections follow the edge of the village roads (with no pavements) so take care of any traffic, particularly with children.
3. There are no stiles, gates or steps on route.

The Forge, the community cafe and shop, provides the perfect place for refreshments before or after your walk

Slindon Forge, Reynolds Lane, BN18 0QT
T - 01243 814324
www.slindonforge.co.uk

A 1.5 mile circular trail around the charming downland village of Slindon, West Sussex. The walking route follows a journey around the village streets, exploring the varied history from its Elizabethan manor house and churches, to its duck pond and pumpkins, and its links to the game of cricket. The village is simply bursting with interest waiting to be discovered.

Getting there

Slindon is a small village which is located about 6 miles east of Chichester and 2 miles west of Arundel in West Sussex. The village is accessed from the A29, close to its junction with the A27. The walk starts and finishes from The Forge cafe/shop on Reynolds Lane in Slindon. The cafe is next to the village hall and there is roadside parking on Reynolds Lane, alongside the small orchard just beyond the Forge.

Approximate post code **BN18 0QT**.

Walk Sections

Go → **1** **Start to Village Sign**



The walk starts and finishes from The Forge, a great place for refreshments before or after your walk. It is thought that the original building here began life as a

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wheelwright's in about 1860, and was extended to become a full forge in about 1880. At that time it would have been a vital part of village life, making and repairing agricultural and domestic ironwork as well as shoeing horses. The forge remained in use by a farrier until about 2000. An ambitious community project has converted the building into a fabulous community run shop and cafe. The café is licensed, serves delicious coffee, light meals and cakes – much of it homemade, or sourced from local suppliers. There's free wi-fi and dogs, cyclists and walkers are made very welcome.

Standing on Reynolds Lane, facing The Forge, turn right and follow the pavement heading uphill. You will pass the community orchard on the left. The orchard contains a wide range of fruit trees including cooking and eating apples, plums, damsons, pears, medlar and quince. In early January each year, the orchard hosts a Wassailing ceremony where the community comes together to hold a party and sing to the trees to promote a good harvest for the coming year. Wishes and ribbons are tied onto the tree branches.

Soon after the orchard, you will reach a junction of roads and, on the left, you'll see the Millennium village sign. Slindon is home to the oldest cricket club in continuous existence, and has a strong argument for being the village where modern cricket originated. The sign depicts an old cricket bat, ball and wicket, the exact shape and size of the bat and wicket that was first used in Slindon in 1731.

1 → 2 Village Sign to St Mary's Church



Stay on the main road, as it bends right. Take care here as there are no pavements for a short distance, walk on the left-hand road edge and listen carefully for any traffic. After this narrow section join the right-hand pavement, with horse paddocks to the right and pretty cottages to the left.

The village is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Eslindone, probably from the Old English for 'sloping hill'. Today, two thirds of the properties in the village are estate houses (built for the workers of Slindon Estate) and these can be identified by their burgundy coloured paintwork. On your tour of the village look out for this distinctive paintwork and the pretty property names such as Hope Cottage, Timbers, Spinaway Cottage, Hazelgrove and The Hermitage.

Take the first turning on the left into Church Hill (the first section has no pavement so take care of any traffic). As the road begins to bend right, you'll see a set of pretty flint terraced cottages, fine examples of the surviving estate cottages. Further along (as the pavement begins) you will pass the village duck pond on the left.

The road begins to climb more steeply passing the impressive Georgian property, The Grange, with an impressive ancient fruit tree visible through the garden railings. A little further up the hill,

pass the Bailiff's House on the left. Opposite, on the right, look for the thatched railway carriage within the grounds of a property – third class, smoking, complete with guard's van – built around 1874 and moved to its current resting ground in 1906. Soon after this, on the left, you'll come to St Mary's Church.

2 → 3 St Mary's Church to Slindon College



Take a moment to look at St Mary's Church. The building of this ancient church was started in 1106 probably by St. Anselm, who owned the nearby Slindon Palace. Archbishop Langton (a signatory of the Magna Carta) died here in 1228. The church houses the only wooden effigy in a Sussex church, thought to be that of Sir Anthony St Leger (who died 1539) in full armour.

Continue climbing Church Hill, with a flint arched wall (part of the old church grounds) to the left. On the right you'll pass a property called The Old Inn House, an old public house now converted to a private residence. You will come to a T-junction with Top Road, with a circular bench surrounding a tree.

Turn left here, following the tall flint wall on the left (taking care of any traffic). On the right you'll pass the Catholic church of St Richard's. Above the wall on the left you'll soon be able to see the distinctive buildings of Slindon House, which is now home to Slindon College. Notice the tall chimneys and the distinct copper topped domed bell tower.

Continue until you reach the entrance gates to the college, on the left. Alongside the gates is the North Lodge, marking an old entrance to Slindon House. To understand the history of this manor house and the village, we need to go right back to the times of the Saxons.

3 → 4 Slindon College to Slindon Pumkins

In AD 684 Caedwalla (the King of Wessex) was granted Slindon and he gave it to Bishop Wilfred who then donated it to the Archbishops of Canterbury. A palace was built for the archbishops (near to this site of the modern day Slindon House) as well as a Medieval deer park. The estate stayed in the ownership of the archbishops until given to the crown (Henry VIII) in the 1500s. The present Tudor structure, by Sir Garrett Kempe, was owned by the Kempes in the 1500s and 1600s, and the Earls of Newburgh in the 1700s and 1800s. In 1861 on the death of Anne, Countess of Newburgh, Slindon House passed to Scottish Catholics, the Leslies who also built St. Richard's Church.



In 1914 reconstruction took place by a wealthy London entrepreneur, Wooten Isaacson (Queen Victoria's dressmaker) for his sister Violet, Lady Beaumont. When Lady Beaumont died, she bequeathed Slindon House, along with the surrounding parkland and beech woods, to the National Trust. Her ghostly presence is said to appear from time to time in certain areas on the ground floor! Slindon House served as a convalescent hospital in the Great War and as a billet for evacuees and Canadian troops in WWII. Today the house is home to Slindon College, an independent day and boarding school providing specialist learning support for boys, including those with dyslexia.

When you are ready to continue, retrace your steps back along Top Road with the college now to the right. When you reach the junction with Church Hill, keep straight ahead along Top Road. Keep ahead passing Hollyhock Cottage on the right and immediately after this you will come to Slindon Pumpkins on the right.

4 → 5 Slindon Pumpkins to End



Ralph Upton grew pumpkins here in Slindon for over 40 years. From September to November (peaking around Hallowe'en) the barns adjoining his former home are festooned with a display created from 50-plus varieties of pumpkin and over 30 varieties of squash. The range of sizes, colours and shapes is extraordinary with additions every year. Following Ralph Upton's sad demise, aged 87, in June 2009, his son Robin and Ralph's loyal team have kept his tradition alive and preserve Slindon's reputation as Britain's pumpkin capital. Even if you're visiting when the full display isn't on show, you are likely to see pumpkins for sale outside the gates.

Keep straight ahead, ignoring Dyers Lane, off to the right. Soon afterwards you will come to Slindon Pottery on the right. The pottery makes and sells a whole range of earthenware including kitchen ware, ornaments and, of course, ceramic pumpkins!

A little further along, Bleak House (the large cream house dating from 1719) bears a blue plaque commemorating the fact that this was the home of the writer, Hilaire Belloc from 1870 to 1953. His most famous works include the collection of poems, *Cautionary Tales for Children*, and the poem *Matilda*, the story of a young girl who was burnt to death because of her own lies.

Ignore Mill Lane off to the left, simply follow the main road as it begins to descend, passing the Old Bakery on the right. Follow the road as it swings right, passing the Old School on the right. Continue on the pavement heading downhill, passing Gaston Farm on the left. The farm has an Open Lambing event every March/April where you can see lambs being born, enjoy a tractor ride and maybe even cuddle an orphan lamb.

Soon you'll see the junction with Church Hill off to the right. Ignore this, simply keep straight ahead. From this point you will be retracing your steps back to the start. Continue downhill past the horse paddocks. Where the pavement ends, cross to the right-hand road edge and proceed with caution along the narrow section of road (taking care of any traffic). Stay on the main road as it bends left and a little further along you'll reach The Forge for some well-earned hospitality.

Please support The Forge community shop and café which has sponsored this walk together with the National Trust and the South Downs National Park.

A brilliant transformation and an example of what can be achieved when villagers work together.

Mr & Mrs & G, Boxgrove

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Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

